

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SCHEDULE

TIME	EVENT	PLACE
9:15am	Conference General Zoom Link (Opening & Closing Remarks, & Keynote Address): https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvc-2qrTwqHdX-zN3coakN5HDDPgBd93gu EDT Opening Remarks	DAC 416A
9:30am- 10:45am EDT	Panel 1: Creating Art in Pandemic (IN-PERSON) Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvdu2ppj4pGtMahA9wWwX8p5h7KbLDzoct Moderator: Dr. Tina lemma Tech: Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls	DAC 416A
9:30am- 10:45am EDT	Panel 2: Pandemonium & History (VIRTUAL) Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85364827211?pwd=YWNFBfFY2TWxZZ1VraFhQNY85VU0vUT09 Moderator: Colleen McClintock Tech: Dr. Anne Ellen Geller	DAC 416B

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SCHEDULE (CONT.)

TIME	EVENT	PLACE
11:00am-12:15pm EDT	<p>Panel 3: Living Pandemonium in the Everyday (IN-PERSON)</p> <p>Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAtce2hqTkjHdzX7CGZQYWGwDZL-DMQQthp</p> <p>Moderator: Joey Weisler Tech: Alexis Normandia</p>	DAC 416A
11:00am-12:15pm EDT	<p>Panel 4: Behind the Free Store: Understanding Radical Love and Mutual aid</p> <p>Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88615332135?pwd=eDR4emRRdWhuVHpaUmUya1pNY2V1UT09</p> <p>Moderator: Zoe Weinberg Tech: Hannah Sims</p>	DAC 416B
12:30pm-1:30pm EDT	<p>Lunch Pick up box lunch outside DAC Rooms 416A &B</p>	
1:45pm-2:45pm EDT	<p>Keynote Speaker: Khadjiah Johnson https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvc-2qrTwqHdX-zN3coakN5HDDPgBd93gu</p> <p>Moderator: Jaymi L. Grullón Tech: Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls</p>	IRC RESOURCE ROOM SUN YAT SEN HALL
3:00pm-4:00 pm EDT	<p>Social/Open Mic/Closing Remarks https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvc-2qrTwqHdX-zN3coakN5HDDPgBd93gu Tech:</p>	IRC RESOURCE ROOM SUN YAT SEN HALL

PANELS & PARTICIPANTS

PANEL 1: CREATING ART IN PANDEMIC

Giselle Magana - "Within Each Hour," St. John's University, MA student

Abstract:

When I discovered that St. John's University English Department and the English Graduate Student Conference Committee wanted to call attention to the number of ways in which COVID-19 has transformed academia and our own lives I was intrigued. I agree that the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic set off a chain of events that has caused multiple disruptions not only globally but within our daily lives. When I first heard about what was occurring in China between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, I didn't think much of it because I naively assumed it was so far away it would not affect us. However, once nonessential businesses were shut down and everyone was required to stay home everything around me felt as if it was crashing down. My family was directly hit by the pandemic. My mother suffered wage cuts in preparation for the economic disaster her job anticipated. My grandmother on my father's side passed away in Mexico due to a heart attack. Meanwhile, my grandmother on my mother's side was admitted into the hospital during the first wave of Covid-19. My mother had been experiencing a cough for a week or two before lockdown. She didn't think much of it until her mother was admitted into the hospital and my father started showing similar symptoms. Less than a week into lockdown it was confirmed my grandmother who suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol tested positive for Covid-19, a virus people in the medical field were unsure how to treat. A virus many individuals several years younger than her were dying of. The beginning of the pandemic was a scary time for my mother. Despite being sick she continued to work from home for fear of losing her job, she took care of her husband, her mother despite being sick herself, and the rest of the household. She'd be in line ready to purchase groceries in bulk and come home to wash and scrub every item she purchased for fear my sister and I would get sick too. I'm submitting a prose piece written from the point of view of my mother. I write about how she felt and dealt with the uncertainty of the first couple of days of the pandemic as a mother, daughter, and wife. Because I'm Chicana I incorporate Spanish into my writing. I also include religion because it was what helped my mother through what she describes now as a nightmare.

Alexander Radison - "Kintsugi," St. John's University, PhD student

Abstract:

While the pandemic has undoubtedly thrown the world into a general state of pandemonium on the macro level, it has also affected us all at the micro/personal level. In my case, trying to navigate a long-distance polyamorous partnership during a pandemic was the very definition of personal pandemonium. Over the course of the Fall semester, I wrote a chapbook of poetry titled Kintsugi, where I examined my grieving process as I mourned the loss of this relationship. Poet and professor Gregory Orr writes that "poetry is compelling in crisis... because it is superbly designed to handle both aspects of experience: the reality of disorder and the self's need for some kind of order" (22). In this chapbook, I attempted to capture the chaos of grief and fix it to the page as truthfully as I could in an attempt to impose some sort of order on the pandemonium that I felt. Poetry cannot heal a broken heart back to the way it was before the break, but like urushi lacquer, the words on the page can be the glue that holds the broken pieces roughly back into place. At least, that's how it worked for me. I am also including a representative sample of poems below.

PANELS & PARTICIPANTS

"Chronic Heat: Excerpts from Summer 2020," St. John's University, BA student

Abstract:

Summer 2020' was paralyzing a scene. These works are a response to the alarm and warning within our daily interactions. In this world, I have presumed and lived with whites and others, blacks and others, but rarely does my mind reflect on the attitudes of interracial conflict. As a Georgian, this was not of issue. I am also told that I am an anomaly for having been convinced that the system I am in is for me, that the people I chose to interact with and have years past I am told that black and white is not "black and white". , in a new light Although simple and short, these works are only excerpts and cannot be extended. The state of each is as my attention span would allow amiss the protests and unending spurts of media. These works when studied carefully will take you through brief stages of grief: acceptance, denial, and mourning: knowing blackness, knowing

Sara Rodia-

"The Pandemic Plot in Contemporary Literature," St. John's University, BA/MA student

Abstract;

Even though we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, authors have begun to write and publish books that address the pandemic and that focus on a pandemic plot. The pandemic plot focuses on the everyday and the harsh reality of living through this pandemic, something that everyone in our society has experience with. The idea of writing about the everyday is reflective of 19th century realism and novels of the everyday life. The questions that I am looking to answer are: How do these types of stories relate to our everyday lives, how are these stories reflective of the everyday realism pieces in the 19th century, and how interested are people in reading about the ongoing pandemic? Therefore, this paper aims to explore how prevalent the pandemic plot is in our current society and how the idea of the pandemic plot relates to the realism of the 19th century. To address these questions, I will research defining elements of 19th century realism literature in order to examine how closely they align with the elements of the pandemic plot. I will also poll readers to discover how they feel about reading and engaging with the pandemic plot. Therefore, this presentation will be multimodal and have a section (or sections) examining the pandemic plot and its connections to 19th century realism and a section exploring readers opinions on engaging with pandemic literature, or the new everyday literature of the 21st century.

PANELS & PARTICIPANTS

PANEL 2: PANDEMIC HISTORY & COVID-19

C. E. Spies -

"Deconstructing Sovereignty in the Age of Coronavirus," Villanova University, candidate

Abstract:

Since March 2020, accounts of what it is that the coronavirus pandemic represents have overwhelmingly engaged in binary thinking, seeking to identify a singular threat that must be isolated and excised if we are to emerge from this pandemic. The media has inundated us with questions raised by public intellectuals, and politicians. The choice is ours, they say: death or happiness? Safety or freedom? Human casualties or economic collapse? The lives of the few, or the livelihoods of the many? Protect our nation, or inoculate the rest of the world? These questions—and the recommendations they produce—flow from a metaphor of conflict between two irreconcilable polarities: this is, we are told, a war. This way of thinking is not unique to the current pandemic: rather, the pandemic has illuminated how political and economic thinking has long been predicated on viewing the world as a battlefield where other humans represent a constant threat to the sovereign subject. But insofar as it reveals the porousness of bodily and national borders, the COVID-19 pandemic also illuminates the futility of this logic. Reading the pandemic as a conflict between two opposing and separable entities is not only to commit a logical error: it also commits us to a life of perpetual terror, one which forecloses on precisely what Judith Butler calls "a life worth living." These troubling times lay bare the illusions of subject and state sovereignty and call us to a way of thinking that recognizes how our flourishing is always already bound up with that of others, and that reopens the possibility that we might lead lives worth living.

Marika Strano - "The representation of pandemic in ancient and modern authors," Swansea University of Wales, candidate

Abstract:

Many authors throughout history have displayed a sort of fascination for both disorders of the human body and traumatic (and at the same time silent) disasters like pestilences and pandemics. This preoccupation appeared for the first time in Homer's Iliad, then in poets, historians, tragedians like Hesiod, Thucydides, Galen, Sophocles, Lucretius, Vergil, Diodorus Siculus. This fascination continues through writers and poets like Dante, Boccaccio, Torquato Tasso, authors like Daniel Defoe, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce. Thucydides' words to present an analysis of the terrible plague that struck Athens in 430B.C. in his The Peloponnesian War are of a disarming actuality: "the doctors could offer little help at first: they were attempting to treat the disease without knowing what it was, and in there was particularly high mortality among doctors because of their particular exposure" (2.47) And the description of numerous macabre details in the narrative of the plague in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura seems to appear again in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land that, as a response to the trauma of the pandemic "not only captures elements of the pandemic's acute phase at both the individual and collective level; its atmosphere is also saturated with the two most common outcomes of the outbreak: death, and the enervated living death." (Outka, 2019:152) The aim of this proposal is to understand how the authors, over the centuries, has been able to change our normality.

PANELS & PARTICIPANTS

PANEL 3: LIVING PANDEMONIUM IN THE EVERYDAY

Sydney Denham - "Living in Pandemonium," St. John's University, BA/MA student

Abstract:

Dance relies on a sense of community. This community builds together to engage rhythmically not only to music but also to one another in the space. The dance community inhabits an intimate environment, where individuals can express their passions and express their emotions through movement. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, this community shifted to the virtual world. Although the intimacy of in-person events could no longer occur, dancers still found ways to connect with, create with, and empower others through digital mediums, such as TikTok and Instagram. All in all, these platforms offered space for dancers to move throughout the pandemic. In this study, I will explore the ways that these digital mediums allowed the power of dance to live during a pandemic, which in turn, granted this dance community with an outlet for expression. By doing so, I will interview a dancer who experienced these digital arts within higher education, the dance studio, and dance companies in the Boston area. I will also explore different ways dancers and others utilize(d) digital media, like TikTok and Instagram, to further pursue their interests in the art. With my research findings, I will create a multimodal platform that investigates the importance of digital media during the pandemic for dancers and how these platforms assisted in navigating a world where the physical classroom/studio setting was inaccessible.

Elizabeth Thomae -

"Life in Quarantine: The Everyday via TikTok," St. John's University, MA student

Abstract:

Theorist Rita Felski redefines the study of the everyday by viewing it in three distinct facets: repetition, home, and habit. For many at the height of the pandemic in March and April of 2020, the very concepts of repetition and habit were upended, and most found themselves unexpectedly and unwillingly stranded in their homes. While in "quarantine," the lives and habits of people drastically changed, and many scrambled to find a new sense of the "everyday" in unprecedented times. A new normal had to be found for peace of mind—but what did this look like practically? We get a glimpse into this new normal through the cultural phenomenon of TikTok, an app that's popularity boomed with the confining of individuals to their homes. To attempt to understand the everyday lives of the stranded population stranded and to see how they coped amidst the chaos, fear, and confusion, I propose studying the TikTok's of March and April 2020. I will analyze the videos on this platform by searching under specific hashtags and using the principles Felski suggests when concerning the everyday. By doing this, it will show us how the pandemic, especially the quarantine period, redefined what we mean by "everyday" and how we react with the daily world around us.

PANELS & PARTICIPANTS

Zoey Greenwald -

“EAST RIVER MOLLY WATER BEST FRIENDS FOREVER,” New School for Social Research, BA/MA student

Abstract:

Facing climate catastrophe along with the world-upending COVID-19 pandemic, the youngest of us are beginning to imagine a future in a posthuman mode. Youth culture and especially youth subculture in this new decade subsists on the proliferation of images on the internet, as well as images of Internet. We recognize ourselves in popular cyborgs: from electronic musicians to anime heroines, we find ourselves, at our onset, plugged into a cybernetic age.

No longer the Silicon Valley optimists our parents might've been, we mine our digital spaces for all the materiality we can find and scan our material existence for the digital. We use drugs to hack our fleshy bodies into raving machines and in the same breath we spill our teenage guts/viscera onto Instagram. We've no choice but to be online; to interact with our cultural twin, born with us at the turn of this millennium. Whether or not we're in lockdown, the virtual is our language. Whether or not we're thinking about apocalypse, we're thinking about becoming. We're thinking about beyond. We're thinking about networks. And the summers of our youth grow hotter and hotter.

EAST RIVER MOLLYWATER BEST FRIENDS FOREVER is an autotheoretical look into the youth culture and rave subculture of New York right now, in a tentative “post-pandemic,” but also an imminently pre-climate-disaster setting. Flowing freely from an ecstatic online cyborg self-theory to moments of climate dread and apocalyptic affect, the piece deals with virality, networks, (dis)embodiment, and ultimately, the struggle between apocalyptic and posthuman affect for this young generation.

PANEL 4: BEHIND THE FREE STORE: UNDERSTANDING RADICAL LOVE AND MUTUAL AID

Amy Ackel - St. John's University, B.A. student

Julia Luz Betancourt - St. John's University, BA student

Grace Greer - St. John's University, BA student

Ian King - St. John's University, BA student

Njemile Wickham - St. John's University, BA student

Some view COVID-19 as an event that ignited a mutual understanding of inequity and injustice in our society, with daily protests in the streets and consistent demands for government aid. Two years later, much of the country has returned to “normal.” The panel argues the narrative that everyone was impacted by COVID does not mean we each were changed by it. Organizers from the Radical Love Free Store, a new student mutual aid movement fighting inequality and advocating for institutional accountability, will discuss the principles driving their efforts and the challenges they face while radically caring for their peers. Dean Spade, Seattle University Law professor and organizer says, “mutual aid projects expose the reality that people do not have what they need and propose that we can address this injustice together.” Free Store organizers say mutual aid is about providing for each other with no boundaries or expectations, while pointing to the structures and systems responsible for inequality and injustice and the institutions that maintain them. What is the university's responsibility in eradicating inequality? How is a mutual aid movement rejected by the university, even after the social “awakening” COVID has triggered? What does it mean when students find it best to organize outside of recognized university spaces? Free Store organizers explore these questions while taking us through the experience of starting a mutual aid movement at a catholic and Vincentian university in one of the worst-hit boroughs, from 2020 to today.



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